

OFFICIAL, HOME AND BUSINESS LIFE OF GEORGE H. PROUTY

Regarding a candidate for any important state office the public has the right to full knowledge of the man; his qualifications, his activities and above all what he has made of himself, because from such knowledge best forecast can be had of the sort of service he is likely to give the state. With this general principle in mind, the following sketch of the Hon. Geo. H. Prouty of Newport, at present Lieutenant-Governor of Vermont, and the leading candidate for governorship at the hands of the Republican party, has been prepared. It has been drawn largely from the testimony of persons who have known him as neighbor and as an associate, all his life, and who may be presumed to be thoroughly acquainted with his personality and character. His record in public affairs is recent and already under the lime-light, and although it is one of his best assets, it is used here somewhat in a supplementary way rather than otherwise that the scheme of this writing to show the man as a man may be forcibly maintained.

A Successful Business Man

At the outset, the reader should place himself in readiness to be introduced to a successful man of business in the prime of life. (Mr. Prouty is forty-six years old), whose positiveness of purpose, character and action stick out all over him. His personality steps forth not as that of a receptive, waiting-list lingerer upon honors and benefits, but as that of an aggressive man of affairs who has done things, who can do things, and who will do things, who has the habit of undertaking and, best of all, of accomplishing tasks set by an unrelenting master and that master himself. A man of the present he is, whose blood circulates with the verity of the hour and whose activities are all along the lines of present day accomplishment, for both personally and officially, he is no unimportant factor in the moving events which day by day are making for a busier and better Vermont. In a very general sense this is the George H. Prouty who is a candidate for the governorship. More specifically he is what his neighbors say of him and what his record makes him. Now, as to what his neighbors say.

They say that his grandfather was a pioneer in the very beginnings of Newport, having cleared from its original forest one of the valuable farms on the west shore of Lake Memphremagog, — that both his grandfather and his father represented the sturdiest form of citizenship, all of which he has inherited. His father had large lumber interests and early adopted the policy of acquiring spruce timberland within easy reach of Lake Memphremagog so far as the same was available for purchase, a policy which the subject of this sketch has continued.

His father's firm bore the same name as that now so well known in all lumber markets, that of Prouty & Miller. As a boy, George H. Prouty entered the firm's lumber camps to learn the entire business from the logging stage upward, and soon after reaching his majority he secured a sixth interest upon the retirement of a brother he acquired another sixth interest which made altogether a third. This has been his holding ever since.

Meantime, he has been managing partner a period covering nearly a quarter of a century.

In this time the business of Prouty & Miller has more than quadrupled. The firm has three mills in the vicinity of Newport besides a large dressing mill, with others in Canada and also in Maine. About 300 men are in the firm's employ, 250 of whom are heads of families. Under Mr. Prouty's management his policy has been the retention of the same men as help in all departments of the business as long as possible, and many of the men have been with the firm for more than thirty years. The fact that Mr. Prouty has nowhere any better friends or more earnest supporters than among the employees of his firm is very significant.

Mr. Prouty's twenty-five years of management have been characterized by a singular devotion to the duties belonging thereto. His practice has been to be at his office at the same hour his help reach their work—seven o'clock in the morning—and his working day has been, as to length, not materially

different from theirs. In this devotion to his firm's business nothing has been allowed to intervene or distract. As a successful man who has found financial reward in his success, and which is by no means the rule, the allurements of other businesses, or of seemingly profitable investment opportunities, have not appealed to him. Beyond being a director, and an influential one, too, in the Orleans Trust Co., a Newport banking institution, and a director in the Passumpsic Telephone Co., he has no business interests apart from those of his firm. This fact argues strongly for a wholesome conservatism that is by no means useless in a state's chief executive. Among his associates in his two directorships he ranks as the possessor of a very high degree of foresight on all matters wherein the future of business propositions is involved. This is another good quality for a governor to possess.

Mr. Prouty's Home Life

At home Mr. Prouty is counted in the very front rank of Newport's public spirited men. Local offices he has never sought, and has never accepted but one, a membership in the Newport village water board. In that he made his duties just as exacting as his own business engagements through the life-long practice of attending to the limit upon whatever he undertakes to do. Of his honestly acquired means he is a generous giver to every worthy charity, although in that his method is unobtrusive and always preferably unheralded and unannounced. Certain it is that no appeal for help where help is needed ever fails of material response from him.

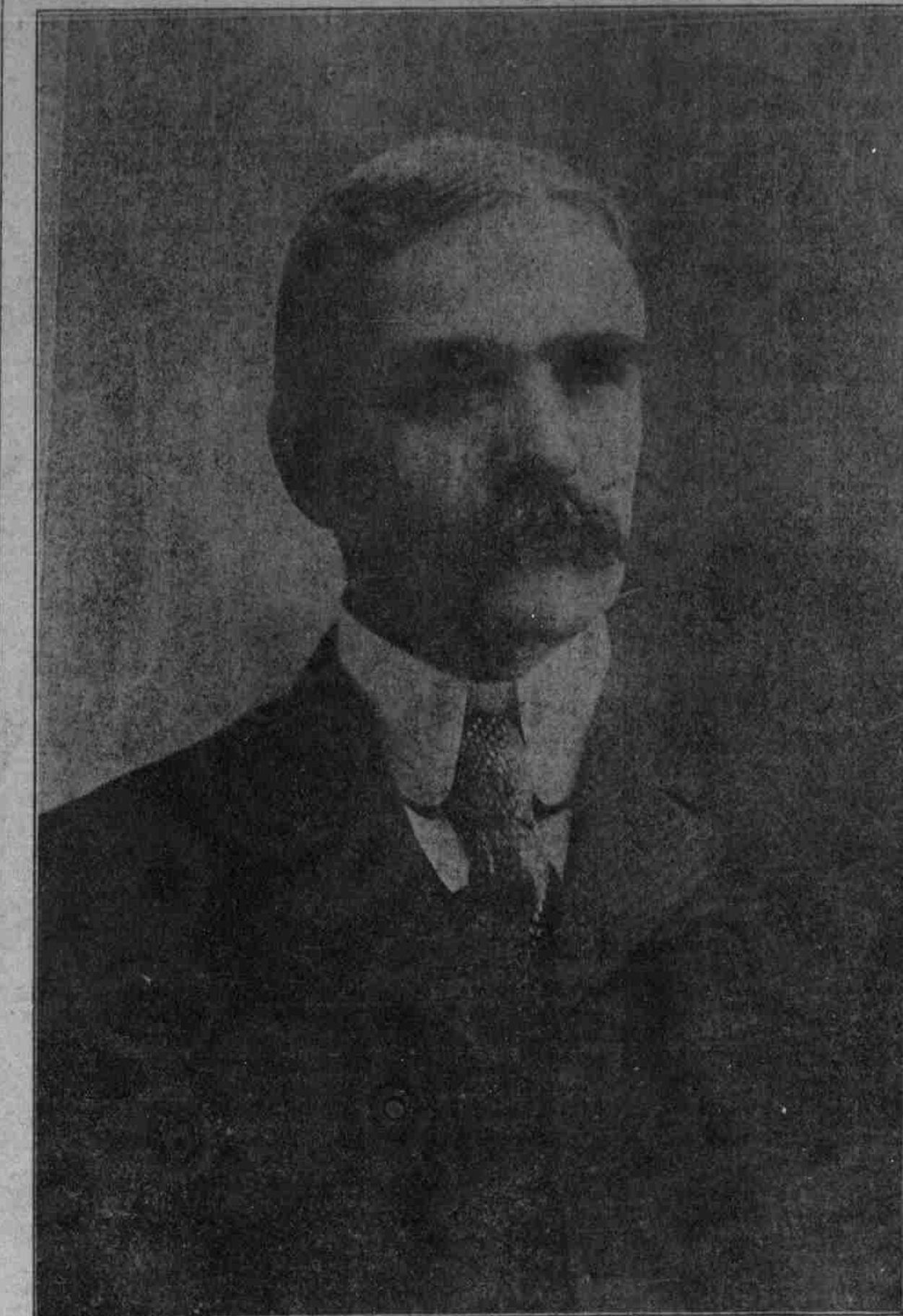
In his church relations, Mr. Prouty is a regular attendant at the First Congregational church of Newport, and he has been the largest single contributor to its financial support for many years. During about twenty-five years he has been choir-master at his church, and the occasion is exceedingly rare when he is not found in that place. He has been known to make a Saturday night return from Boston or New York, where business uncompleted demanded that he go back the following Monday, in order that the choral service for Sunday might not be impaired by his absence. Mr. Prouty is a thirty-second degree Mason, and his membership in Masonic bodies is with the local lodges so far as they reach.

In the social life of Newport, Mr. Prouty and his most estimable wife have always been leaders. At their modern appointed residence, which was the homestead of the late John A. Prouty, Mr. Prouty's father a home-like welcome and generous hospitality is always the rule. Indeed, both Mr. and Mrs. Prouty are more contented in sharing their possessions and pleasures with their friends than in their own personal enjoyment of them. While their home is unblest by children, it is the resort of hosts of friends who find therein a home life pleasant to enjoy and gratifying to share.

Mr. Prouty's Public Career

Mr. Prouty first entered public life as the representative from Newport in the legislative session of 1890. The circumstances of his election were such as to show his home popularity to excellent advantage. Previous to the mention of his name two other candidates within the Republican party had made a good deal of headway and it was late in the canvass that certain friends secured from Mr. Prouty consent to make him a candidate. At the same time the Democrats of Newport thinking that they could take profitable advantage of a three-cornered contest in the other party, selected their strongest man, one who was popular in both parties as their candidate. The result was Mr. Prouty's easy election over all other contestants, and that without making any personal effort in his own behalf. In the House of Representatives Mr. Prouty was an effective member of the important committee of Ways and Means.

Mr. Prouty's next public service was performed in the legislature of 1904 as a senator from Orleans County. His nomination and election to the office were accomplished with only such unimportant opposition as the minority



Hon. George H. Prouty of Newport.

As a republican candidate for the governorship of Vermont, George H. Prouty has made public his ideas of the needs of the state. He has stated both orally and in print that he advocates the following:

State supervision of telephone and telegraph lines.

Revision and adjustment of our present unjust and unequal tax laws.

The continuation of our present improved school system.

The enforcement of the present corporation act which applies to the regulation of the railroads.

Reform in our justice courts and the wiping out of the fee system.

The building of permanent roads with the state's highway tax and under adequate and experienced supervision.

An amendment to the constitution which will permit of amendments being made to it oftener than is now provided.

The advertising of the state's resources, as well as including Vermont as a garden for tourists in the summer, so that capital and people may be attracted to the commonwealth.

party could offer in the presidential year. As a senator, Mr. Prouty served as chairman of the joint standing committee on Immigration and Industrial Interests, a member of the general committee of the senate and of the senate committee on banks, and also as a member of the joint standing committee on game and fisheries. Reference to the senate journal of that year shows that Mr. Prouty was an exceedingly active member. He introduced no less than twenty-six bills including those from committees of which he was a member. It is noted that most of these bills in effect became enacted into statute law.

Among the subjects to which the bills introduced by Mr. Prouty related may be mentioned those of divorce, parole of prisoners, electric railways, highway taxes and their dis-

tribution, seizure of illegal devices for fishing, licenses for non-resident hunters of deer, prohibiting the sale of fire arms to minors, regulation of telegraph, telephone lines and electric light lines, loans of trust companies to their officers and directors, provision for the weekly payment of wages by corporations, and the regulation of the speed of automobiles and their proper use of public highways. As regards the last named measure which originated in the House of Representatives, Mr. Prouty was virtually its sponsor in the Senate and actively interested himself in its passage. This was the first real effective legislation relating to the regulation of automobiles. From this record it is to be concluded that Mr. Prouty was a very active and useful member of the 1904 Senate, as in a

large measure the elements of the bills he favored are now considered as belonging to the most progressive legislation of recent years.

For the nomination to the Lieutenant-Governorship in 1906 there were three candidates before the Republican state convention, the late John W. Merryfield, of Newfane, twice Speaker of the House, the Hon. George F. Leland, of Springfield, and Mr. Prouty, the subject of this sketch. The well-remembered popularity of Mr. Merryfield and the widely extended business and fraternal order friendships of Mr. Leland, made the contest interesting if not uncertain, but Mr. Prouty secured a handsome triumph with the same sort of loyalty of support that has marked his election to the less important offices previously held by him. The state cam-

NO BACKWARD STEP, BUT ONWARD, PLATFORM OF MR. PROUTY

Candidate for Governor, Geo. H. Prouty, conservative in the conduct of his business, and with a record for conservatism in the offices of public trust he has held, stands for the things which he believes are benefitting Vermont and for things which he honestly feels will do materially to that benefit.

He has shown no reluctance in bringing forth a platform, and upon that platform presented the voters of the state weeks ago, he firmly stands. So concise and complete is that platform that at no time has he felt it necessary to supplement it with additional recommendations.

The candidate is presenting his ideas of legislation does not arrogate to himself the right to dictate to his party. His platform is in the line of suggestion—not presented as coming from a dictator. The platform reads:

The Republican party the past two years has instituted measures to protect the rights of the people against encroaching corporate interests, has passed laws preventing discrimination in railroad rates, has commenced the work of abolishing grade crossings and has given the railroad commission real powers so that its orders must be obeyed, has passed laws opening the books of corporation to inspection of the courts, and instituted other measures to guard the rights of the people against law-breaking corporations, whether railroads or otherwise. If elected governor I should favor continuing the policies which have been so well begun and should favor placing all public corporations including telephone and telegraph companies under the control and supervision of the state to such a degree as would insure and safeguard the interests and rights of the people.

We have passed school laws which will be of the greatest benefit to the state. I believe that there should be no backward step taken regarding these laws but rather that we should strive to perfect them.

More Aid For Good Roads

The working of the new highway law has proved that it was an eminently wise one. I believe we should not only retain all its best features but that we should also endeavor to improve it, always having in mind that the building of good roads is a matter of education and that only by expert supervision can we succeed in our efforts to make our highways what they should be. The state should continue the policy of doing all it can afford to assist in this work, always remembering that it is impossible for the smaller communities to come up to the highest standard except through the aid of the larger communities.

Many great reforms have been brought about in our penal institutions the past two years and their management has been in competent hands, but there still remain improvements to be made along the lines now so well laid and working so well. We should do all within our power to raise our criminal class to a higher level and through our institutions we should aim to benefit the fallen.

Judiciary System Not Perfect

The increased expense of our courts incident to the adoption of the dual system shows that we have not yet solved the problem involved in the attempt to reach the economical yet efficient administration of justice and I believe the administration of just

ice should be made as simple and inexpensive as possible and all necessary safeguards should be retained.

Too much time is wasted every session of the Legislature in considering loosely drawn and needless bills. It should be the endeavor of all those connected with that body to prevent waste of time. An excellent start in economizing time was made at the last session and still greater improvement in this direction is possible at the coming session.

Short, active and effective sessions should be the desire of every legislator.

The Taxation Problem

I am fully aware of the inequalities of taxation existing in Vermont at the present time and this is one of the great questions which must be passed on by the coming Legislature. I believe that the proper course was taken during the last session in providing for a commission to thoroughly investigate conditions and to make such a report as they thought best, after duly considering all matters brought to their attention. That commission is made up of men of such ability and sound judgment that I have no doubt they will make such recommendations as will appeal to the good judgment of the coming Legislature and that such laws will be passed as will more nearly equalize the burdens of taxation than at the present time.

Personally I feel that the greatest difficulty with our system of taxation is non-taxation; that is, those people who have large amounts of property fail to pay their just proportion. As the law is today a man owns a small farm which is visible property and on which he must pay his full share of taxes. On the other hand a man may be possessed of a million dollars in stocks and bonds and all he has to do is to refuse to make an inventory, in which case the listers may find what they can and double his list, which may not amount to an hundredth part of what he is actually worth. I am well aware that this is a very hard matter to regulate but we should certainly make an honest effort to do away with any such state of affairs and I have great hopes that when the report of the commission is received some remedy will be offered which will appear to be feasible. I trust that when such report is received and placed before the Legislature no hasty action will be taken, as has been done some times in the past.

Vermont Should Be Advertised

I believe the resources of our state are very great, not only in our quarries and mines, but in our undeveloped water powers and our beautiful scenery, and that it would be for the best interests of our state to have the Board of Agriculture or some other equally suitable agent to take all means possible to advertise our resources and attractions to those residing elsewhere, with a view of bringing them to Vermont either as visitors or permanent residents.

State expenditures should be made with a judgement that bespeak economy in every instance, and by this I do not mean that we should be penny wise and pound foolish, but I do wish to convey to the minds of all that we should fit our garment to our resources, keeping the state free from debt and our people safely placed above the necessity of a direct state tax.

I can simply assure the citizens of Vermont that if they should see fit to elect me to the position of governor I should work only for the welfare and prosperity of the state; that I have absolutely no political debts to pay or agreements to carry out, and that I shall be perfectly free to recommend such policies as it seems to me will be best for the welfare and prosperity of our glorious state.

paign of 1906 is of too recent happening for needful treatment in this writing. The Shibboleth of "Proctor and Prouty" representing the combination of two of Vermont's young and aggressive business men as leaders under conditions involving an opposition peculiar in Vermont politics, awoke a response that culminated in a triumphant election and the installation in the two highest offices for the first time in the state's history of two men qualified as above mentioned.

Mr. Prouty's incumbency as Lieutenant-Governor has been characteristically active as gauged by the usual conception of its duties. As presiding officer of the Senate his action and influence was invariably favorable to all legislation designed to advance every legitimate state interest, and of which

the final enactment to no great extent made the legislative session of 1906 one distinctively epoch marking.

Among the measures that benefited by his helping hand may be mentioned that giving needed powers to the Railroad Commission, that increasing corporation taxes, that providing for skilled supervision of the public schools, and that providing for a special commission to investigate and report upon a better equalization of all taxes. Aside from the legislative service, Lieut.-Gov. Prouty has represented the State on many occasions where the tests of capacity have been exacting if more honorary than administrative. At these times it is perhaps needless to say, the dignity and traditions of Vermont and the governor's office have been represented in accordance with the best standards.